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Montana Archivist

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SHRAB MEETING HELD IN GREAT FALLS

The Montana SHRAB met at the Great Falls Public Library on May 13, 2003, at 9:30 am. Members present included Molly Miller, Jodi Allison-Bunnell, Judy Ellinghausen, Peggy Gow, Ellen Craine, Sami Pierson and Donna McCrea.

Miller introduced Sami Pierson from the Heritage Museum of Libby as a new member of the board. She also announced the resignation of Kim Allen Scott of Montana State University, effective in January. The committee made a motion to add Donna McCrea from the University of Montana to the board. It was seconded and the action is pending approval by the Governor.

Jodi Allison-Bunnell then reported on the grant-funded projects in which the University of Montana, the Montana Historical Society and eleven other institutions are participating. The Northwest Digital Archives (NWDA) grant will result in an EAD database of records from 2200 archives and manuscripts collections in fifteen different repositories in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. The Northwest Archives Processing Initiative (NWAPI) grant makes possible the processing and reprocessing of collections to improve access and create EAD enabled finding aids. Discussion about SHRABs role in support of NWDA and NWAPI followed.

Miller reported on the progress of SHRAB Administrative Grant received last fall. Miller will reapply for a SHRAB Administrative Grant for 2003 to continue funding travel to meetings, distribution of newsletters, and possibly travel for members expanding the NWDA project.

Allison-Bunnell announced that she has written an NEH preservation grant requesting \$5000 to hire consultants to update, reprint, and distribute 80 new Preferred Practices Manuals. The grant, if funded, would also provide for two half-day hands-on workshops based on the Manual. At least one of these workshops would be offered in conjunction

with a conference attended by a group likely to be interested.

Miller distributed a copy of a letter she and the president of MAM had written to the Rocky Mountain Museum of Military History in response to an article that ran in the *Missoulian* about a donation to that museum. The article and subsequent information indicated that items not retained by the museum would be sold and that the Museum's Board members would be among those purchasing. The letter pointed out that often discarded materials important to the history of Montana are offered to other institutions with a relevant collecting scope, and that sale of items to board members could be perceived as an ethical conflict.

In other business Crain mentioned that the Montana Preservation Alliance is looking for archivists to discuss how records tie in to historic preservation. Miller discussed a few of the new Montana State laws which may affect records administrators, including DD214, which makes veterans records held by county clerk and recorders confidential. Allison-Bunnell mentioned the possibility of a joint statement being issued by the Society of American Archivists and the Northwest Archivists criticizing a decision by the National Park Service to outsource many of their positions, including librarians, curators, and archivists. (*cont. p. 4*)

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MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOURS TO CHANGE DUE TO BUDGET CUTBACKS

The Montana Historical Society Museum will have to begin closing on Sundays and Mondays year-round effective Memorial Day weekend in order to comply with the Society's final appropriation approved by the 2003 Legislature, Society Director Arnold Olsen said Friday.

"This is a difficult and painful decision," Olsen said. "As a result of the cuts that have been made in the recent session, we simply can not meet our workload and provide adequate security and care for our precious collections without reducing public services including eliminating Sunday and Monday openings."

Montana's Museum will be open Tuesday through Saturday year round after this Memorial Day weekend. In the past, the Society has been open every day during the summer, and Monday through Saturday during the winter season.

In addition, the Society will have to eliminate most public guided tours of the Capitol and the Original Governor's Mansion. Provisions will be made for a very limited number of pre-scheduled tours for large groups, however, this will eliminate regularly scheduled hours for the OGM and effectively close it. The public can still take self-guided tours of the Capitol.

"We know this will have an impact on K-12 students who in the past have been able to take advantage of guided tours on field trips to Helena," Olsen said.

The Society budget has been reduced \$760,000 for the next biennium from current levels by the cuts resulting from the recent regular legislative session, which is about a 20 percent cut in general funds.

Since the special session, the Society has been operating with the same staff level that it had in the mid 1980s, Olsen said.

"These cuts make it even worse," he said. "Despite staff reductions, demand for services has steadily increased over the years."

Since the Society is a small agency that has been operating on only 57.68-fulltime equivalent employees, there were no options left short of eliminating personnel and instituting the Monday and Sunday closings, Olsen said. The Society will be operating with about 10 percent fewer fulltime equivalent employees from the last biennium.

The hour reductions will allow the Society to consolidate its security force and provide more time for employees to perform their important behind the scenes tasks that represent the core of its statutory and professional responsibilities to Montana history and heritage. The Society will be open only for administrative business on Mondays.

"Most people don't realize that the same staff that serves them in our Research Center, which includes the library, archives and photo archives, and our other programs are the same people responsible for caring for, maintaining, accessioning, researching and cataloging our collections," Olsen said. "Monday closings will allow them to catch up on their already large backlog of work."

In order to somewhat offset the impact of Monday closings, Olsen said that the Research Center, which has been closing over the noon hour since the special session, will now remain open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday. The Research Center also will be open Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Photo Archives will be open from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday only.

"People come from all over the state and nation to do research at the Society, and it has been a source of frustration to make them stop their work over the noon hour," Olsen said.

(Cont. p. 3)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jun. 15-27	Western Archives Institute, San Francisco, CA
Jul 10-11	Council of State Historic Records Coordinators Meeting, Providence, RI
Jul 20-22	Montana State Historic Preservation Office's Regional Workshop on Preserving Place and Culture, Polson
Jul. 21-Aug. 1	Western Archives Institute for Native American and Tribal Archivists, Redlands, CA
Aug. 18-24	Society of American Archivist Conference, Los Angeles, CA
Sep. 6-7	Montana State Genealogical Society Conference, Havre
Oct. 23	Archives workshop, Helena
Oct. 23-26	Montana History Conference, Helena

PIERSON AND MCCREA APPOINTED AS NEW MEMBERS OF SHRAB

Sami Pierson of the Heritage Museum of Libby and the Lincoln County Libraries, and Donna McCrea of the University of Montana were recently appointed as new members of the Montana SHRAB. Pierson and McCrea will fill vacancies on the board caused by the resignations of Anne Foster and Kim Allen Scott. Their terms will last until September of 2004.

Pierson has worked as both an archivist and a librarian. For the past two years she has been employed as the Archivist / Curator at the Heritage Museum in Libby. Recently, though, she accepted the position of Director of the Lincoln County Libraries. Before moving to Montana Pierson worked as a Records Assistant in Kansas and as an Archivist at the Aspen Historical Society in Aspen, Colorado. Pierson received an MA in Public History with an Archives concentration from Colorado State University.

Donna McCrea was hired as the University Archivist at the University of Montana in Missoula in April of this year. She took over the position left vacant by Jodi Allison-Bunnell's move to grant administrator at the same institution. Before moving to Montana, for the second time, McCrea worked as the Special Collections Library & Archivist for the Pikes Peak Library District in Colorado Springs, Colorado. She also worked as the Archives Technician at the Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site in Deer Lodge, Montana. McCrea received an MLIS from the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee.

The SHRAB is pleased to add the talents of both Pierson and McCrea to the Board. If you or someone you know is interested in serving on the SHRAB, please contact Molly Miller at momiller@state.mt.us or 444-7482.

WORKSHOP TO BE HELD AT MONTANA HISTORY CONFERENCE

Anne Foster, University Archivist, of the University of Alaska at Fairbanks and former SHRAB member, will present a workshop on the basics of archives at the Montana History Conference this fall at the Best Western Town Center in Helena. The workshop, which is sponsored by the SHRAB, will build on a pamphlet, "So You Have A Box of Records", which will be published and distributed by the SHRAB this fall. The content of the workshop will focus on the basics of administering and operating an archives, covering topics from procedures for accessioning materials to arranging and describing them.

Registration information will be available this summer; it will be distributed with registration information for the 30th Annual Montana History Conference. If you are interested in attending the conference, the workshop, or both, you can visit the Montana Historical Society's webpage for information about the conference (www.montanahistoricalsociety.org), or contact Molly Miller at momiller@state.mt.us or 444-7482.

MHS CUTS, *cont.*

To provide the public an alternative chance to visit Montana's Museum and the Museum Store, evening programs, exhibit openings and other special events will be scheduled on Thursday, Thursday hours will be extended until 8 p.m. Most of which will allow further consolidation of security forces.

The Society's museum hours will be from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, and 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays. It also will be closed all holidays. All other Society program hour changes also take effect Memorial Day weekend.

"We know this is a great inconvenience for Montanans and will likely have economic impacts for tourism, but we have few choices left," Olsen said. "We regret that we had to take this action, but we must preserve the ability to meet our responsibilities to Montana and its history under our statutory requirements."

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NORTHWEST ARCHIVISTS, INC. ANNUAL MEETING HELD IN SACRAMENTO

A joint meeting of the Northwest Archivists, Society of California Archivists and the Northwest Oral History Association was held in Sacramento, California in early April at the Capitol Plaza Holiday Inn.

The meeting featured three pre-conference workshops on grant writing, preserving digital materials, and appraisal. Conference sessions featured issues such as website preservation, access issues following 9/11, distributing archival expertise, and collecting the records of new religious movements. A variety of roundtable discussions on Native American archives, K-12 outreach, and donor relations were also held. The conference continued its tradition of hosting state roundtables. Tim Ericson, incoming President of the Society of American Archivists gave the keynote address.

The business meeting for NWA was also held during the conference. Outgoing President Jodie Foley of the Montana Historical Society turned over her gavel to incoming President Jodi Allison-Bunnell of the University of Montana.

The next annual meeting of Northwest Archivist, Inc. will be held in Olympia, Washington, on May 6-8, 2004.

Membership information for Northwest Archivist is available on their website at <http://osulibrary.oregonstate.edu/archives/misc/nwa.html> or contact Diana Shenk at (360) 650-7930.

SHRAB MEETING (cont.)

Finally, Miller suggested that future Board meetings be held in conjunction with the meetings of other groups interested in historic records. The fall SHRAB meeting will be held in Helena in October at the time of the Montana History Conference. Miller will look into the possibility of holding the spring meeting in Miles City in conjunction with the MAM annual meeting. The meeting adjourned at 12pm.

